

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /059 W

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R 241720Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5051

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, UK

SUBJECT: TUC OFFICIAL EMPHASIZES SUPPORT FOR GOVERN-
MENT'S UNEMPLOYMENT MEASURES DESPITE PRESS REA
PORTS OF SPLIT

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: NORMAN WILLIS, ASSISTANT GENERAL SEC-
RETARY OF THE TUC, YESTERDAY (SEPTEMBER 23) DENIED --
DURING A CONVERSATION WITH US -- THAT THERE WERE DIFFER-
ENCES BETWEEN THE TUC AND THE GOVERNMENT OVER THE HANDL-
ING OF UNEMPLOYMENT -- AN ALLEGATION THAT HAS APPEARED IN
SOME RECENT PRESS REPORTS. WILLIS ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE
GOVERNMENT'S PLANS IN THIS RESPECT (WHICH THE PRIME MINI-
STER OUTLINED DURING A SPEECH LAST NIGHT AND WHICH WILL
BE OFFICIALLY UNVEILED LATER THIS AFTERNOON) ARE, WHILE
IMPORTANT, ESSENTIALLY PALLIATIVE AND WOULD BE NECESSARY
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EVEN IF UNEMPLOYMENT (NOW AT THE 1.2 MILLION MARK) WERE

NOT SO HIGH. WILLIS, IN FACT, EMPHASIZED THAT THE TUC HAS CONSIDERABLE SYMPATHY FOR WHAT THE GOVERNMENT IS TRYING TO DO, ALTHOUGH A MINORITY WAS SKEPTICAL OR EVEN OPPOSED. LOOKING AHEAD, WILLIS THINKS THAT SOME FORM OF WAGE RESTRAINT MAY CONTINUE AFTER THE CURRENT 12-MONTH PERIOD. END SUMMARY.

2. IN HIS SPEECH LAST NIGHT, THE PRIME MINISTER WARNED THE BRITISH PEOPLE ABOUT "HARD TIMES" AHEAD, AND ANNOUNCED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE UNVEILING MEASURES TODAY WHICH WERE DESIGNED TO ALLEVIATE PARTICULAR ASPECTS OF UNEMPLOYMENT AND TO PREPARE THE GROUND FOR THE TIME WHEN PRODUCTION AND EMPLOYMENT PICK UP. HE SAID THAT THE GOVERNMENT SPECIFICALLY WAS PLANNING MEASURES TO DEAL WITH THE GROWING PROBLEM OF SCHOOL LEAVERS WHO CANNOT NOW FIND JOBS, PREPARING PROGRAMS FOR SPECIAL SKILL TRAINING IN ANTICIPATION OF THE PICK-UP OF THE ECONOMY, ASSISTING COMPANIES (BY SUBSIDIES) TO KEEP AT WORK PEOPLE WHOSE JOBS ARE IN DANGER, OR TO PROVIDE NEW JOBS, AND PROVIDING INVESTMENT ASSISTANCE TO COMPANIES. BUT THE PRIME MINISTER DID NOT ATTEMPT TO HIDE THE FACT THAT THE PROPOSED MEASURES WERE "NOT A GUARANTEE OF EARLY FULL EMPLOYMENT. THE WORLD RECESSION IS TOO DEEP FOR THAT, AND OUR POLICIES DIRECTED TO FULL EMPLOYMENT ARE UTTERLY DEPENDENT ON THE NATION'S COOPERATION IN MAKING OUR ATTACK ON INFLATION A SUCCESS." ON THE BRIGHTER SIDE, MR. WILSON SAID THAT "IN THE WIDER WORLD THERE WERE SIGNS THAT THE DEPRESSION MIGHT BE MOVING TOWARDS ITS END, AND THAT WORLD TRADE MIGHT PICK UP IN THE NEW YEAR." (DETAILED PROPOSALS IN SEPTEL.)

3. THE TUC HAD A PREVIEW OF THESE PROPOSALS EARLIER IN THE WEEK. WHEN JACK JONES AND LEN MURRAY, AMONG OTHER TUC LEADERS, EMERGED FROM A MEETING WITH MR. WILSON AFTER THEIR FIRST DISCUSSION OF THE GOVERNMENT'S MEASURES, JONE

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INDICATED TO THE PRESS HIS GENERAL SATISFACTION WITH WHAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS TRYING TO DO. LATER, WHEN HE REPORTED BACK TO THE TUC GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE, A LARGER GROUP, SOME PRESS REPORTS INDICATED THAT THERE WERE SHARP EXPRESSIONS OF DISSATISFACTION BY TUC LEADERS OVER THE RELATIVELY LIMITED ATTACK ON UNEMPLOYMENT AND PARTICULARLY THE ABSENCE OF IMPORT CONTROLS. THE "DAILY EXPRESS" (SEPTEMBER 24) HEADLINED: "WILSON JOBS PLAN SLAP FOR THE TUC." "THE TIMES" (SEPTEMBER 23) SUGGESTED THAT DESPITE THE OPTIMISM EXPRESSED BY JONES, THE TUC WAS PLANNING TO DRAW UP ITS OWN PRIORITIES LIST FOR HALTING UNEMPLOYMENT RISES AND REPORTED THAT SEVERAL TUC LEADERS HAD EXPRESSED PRIVATE DOUBTS ABOUT THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSALS.

4. IN HIS COMMENTS TO US MR. WILLIS INDICATED THAT THE TUC ESTABLISHMENT IS VERY CONCERNED TO AVOID THE APPEAR-
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ANCE OF ANY FORM OF SPLIT BETWEEN THE TUC AND THE GOVERNMENT AT THIS -- OR PERHAPS AT ANY JUNCTURE. IT IS TRUE, SAID WILLIS, THAT THE TUC ALSO WOULD LIKE TO SEE THE GOVERNMENT INTRODUCE CERTAIN SELECTIVE CONTROLS BUT HE SEES THIS AS NOT A SERIOUSLY "SPLITTING" ISSUE. (THE TUC GENERAL COUNCIL WHICH MET TODAY DID INDICATE THAT THE TUC WOULD CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO GET SELECTIVE IMPORT CONTROLS.) WILLIS MADE IT CLEAR, HOWEVER, THAT IN THE BROAD ER TERMS OF ITS ANTI-INFLATION POLICY, THE GOVERNMENT HAD THE SYMPATHY AND UNDERSTANDING OF THE TUC. HE SAID THAT IN THE COUNTRY AS A WHOLE THERE WAS A MORE REALISTIC AC-

CEPTANCE BY THE RANK AND FILE OF THE NEED TO COOPERATE
WITH THAT POLICY THAN EVEN AMONG SOME TUC LEADERS. AND
HE SURMISED THAT AFTER THE CURRENT TWELVE-MONTH WAGE
PERIOD WAS OVER, THE TUC -- IF BY A CLOSE MAJORITY --
WOULD BE PREPARED TO GO ANOTHER YEAR WITH A MODIFIED IN-
COMES POLICY.

RICHARDSON

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